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Title: NO CHI MINH

Source: Chinese book, [redacted] Hu Chih-ming, San Lien
Bookstore, Peiping, /1949?/.
[redacted]

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one of the countries, especially, and many publications during his sojourns in Paris, London, Moscow, China, Holland and Indonesia are related, but precise dates are often lacking and there are still long periods of time when his whereabouts are unknown. Almost no details about his activities in Moscow are presented. Much of the book is, of course, propaganda for the resistance movement in Indonesia and the Communist movement in China.7

Ho Shi Minh, first President of the New Republic of Viet Nam, stood before a million cheering Vietnamese in Hanoi on 2 September 1945 and proclaimed to the world the independence of Viet Nam. It was the first public appearance of President Ho who revealed himself to the people. Before then, people knew only his name, but not his face. It is small wonder that the world regarded him as a mysterious and aloof

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person who joined into the political arena only after World War II. In fact, much of his history is that this was still a civil, colonial India as it appears even today.

He did not join the political arena, at least not in the revolutionary sense. He was revolutionizing law, or at least "law" means, constitution in 1928, in the sense of the law. He was a scholar, although his early background was of a government official.

After a short period of time, he was always regarded, in the sense, as a kind of official. He was always in the middle of the law. He was not a member of the law. He was the one who was the one in the middle of the law. He was the one who was the one in the middle of the law. He was the one who was the one in the middle of the law.

He was not a member of the law. He was the one who was the one in the middle of the law. He was the one who was the one in the middle of the law. He was the one who was the one in the middle of the law. He was the one who was the one in the middle of the law.

The French government of India was still in the middle of the law. He was the one who was the one in the middle of the law. He was the one who was the one in the middle of the law. He was the one who was the one in the middle of the law. He was the one who was the one in the middle of the law.

The first thing I did was to give her the 30 day supply, stop her
in her car, and drive her back to the car, and then I, myself, turned her
back home. To me, her father, the son of the, good, good, honest
in the world, and then I told her to go to the police station. I told her
that I was going to go to the police station, and I told her to go to the police station.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

For two weeks, Ho was unemployed. The little money he had was used for rent, food, and fees for six hours of English lessons. At last, he went to an employment agency, and was sent to London's modern and aristocratic Carlton Hotel where he was engaged to wash forks and

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That day, he knew that he didn't and was told for certain. In words he met up with the old revolutionist Phan Chu Trinh who had been released from prison and was permitted to live in words through the help of the Committee for the Defense of Individual Rights. He also met a Vietnamese lawyer, then an attorney [or lawyer?]. Immediately he tried, to defend them in the fight for freedom of all people. His response was cold. He considered his disappointment in a letter to them: "The Vietnamese here are doing absolutely nothing and do not intend to do anything of help to our country. I am very disappointed. I must depart from this land..." After he left Paris, Ho's whereabouts was unknown temporarily.

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The World War I was concluded; the Germans were defeated. Representatives of victorious and defeated nations gathered at Versailles

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believe to exist and sign the peace treaty. Besides official delegations to the peace conference, there were many unofficial groups organized by various colonial peoples seeking independence at the conference. Among them was one Vietnamese, Nguyen Thi Xue. Like so many others, he was attracted by President Wilson's call for "self-determination" and regarded Wilson as the father of his race. This idea given him a hope beyond known from America in his own world. He formally submitted to the conference demands for the restoration of independence and freedom of Vietnam and equal status with the French.

He worked closely with the official delegation because of their similar idealism and racial backgrounds. The document he submitted to the conference was based on the ideals, but was drafted in French when Ben Huyen [Huon] since he had not mastered the French language.

The outcome of the conference was contrary to the expectations of the world, and all hopes dashed for rebuilding the peace.

Through this harsh, cruel lesson, he began to see that the wartime promises and declarations of various political leaders were designed to mislead and cheat the colonial peoples. He realized then that his nation was dependent solely on the efforts of the people themselves.

His demands on behalf of Viet Nam, like the demands of other dependent peoples, failed completely, but he continued to devote himself wholeheartedly to securing the liberation of Viet Nam. Whatever money he could save, he used to print handbills and pamphlets about the independence movement for distribution among his people in France, and to the French people. These tracts aroused much interest in the Viet Nam issue. Soon, he was able to send this literature to Viet Nam to

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let the people there know that others abroad were working for their freedom, and to encourage and give moral support to the then secretly developing Nationalist Independence Movement.

VI. ACTIVITIES IN PARIS

Nguyen Ai Quoc's Paris sojourn was one of hardship from the material standpoint. He barely managed to feed and clothe himself by doing whatever work he could find. He did retouching for a photographic studio, painted for a Chinese furniture store, and drew flowers, animals, or fish for a Chinese antique shop, while diligently studying French and other subjects. Gradually, he met some leading figures in Paris political and journalistic circles, such as Charles Languet (Lung Kai), director of Le Monde (grandson of Karl Marx, Socialist Deputy to the National Assembly), Leon Blum, the writer Coehliet (Chiu Li Ya), and Professor Marcel Kachin who later organized the French Communist Party. Encouraged by Languet, he broke into the journalistic world. It was not easy at first because he knew so little French. Nguyen often attended political or cultural meetings at which he spoke for the freedom of the oppressed Vietnamese people. These activities won him the respect and following of overseas Vietnamese. But at the same time he drew the displeasure of those who stood for French colonialism in Viet Nam, and who tried to persecute him. They coerced his employers to drop him; they attacked him publicly, and even resorted to bribery and threats. The police cancelled his domicile permit. Fortunately, Nguyen could count among his acquaintances many liberal politicians, and the police refrained from molesting him.

In addition to his newspaper activities, Nguyen Ai Quoc was a devout reader of literature. He liked, among the English writers, Shakespeare and

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Dickens; Chinese, Lu Hsin; and French, Hugo and Zola. French writers and Tolstoi influenced him greatly, and he began to write novels and plays. Li Humante published one of his serials which depicted the life of a Paris workman and a play satirizing the Emperor of Annam who was visiting the Paris world fair. He also wrote a small pamphlet exposing the crimes of French colonialists, which he sent to Viet Nam secretly.

Despite the hardships and difficulties he faced in Paris, Nguyen was not discouraged. On the contrary, he became stronger and more determined in his work. Although life was not easy for Nguyen in Paris, he was happy. He was still young and active. He joined many groups, such as the Arts and Science Society, Friends of Arts Association, and Travel and Sightseeing Club. During his vacations, he traveled with members of these clubs in France, Italy, Switzerland, Germany and, the Vatican City.

In his travels and at meetings, Nguyen met many nationals of Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco and Malta. He organized in Paris a League of Colonial Nationalists [Inter-Colonial Union] to fight for liberation of colonial peoples. Propaganda was its principal work. They raised sufficient money to publish a small weekly, Balia (Fa-li-ya). Nguyen was the sole person in charge of editing, publishing, printing and circulation. The publication met with immediate success among workers and the common people. But it also met many difficulties. It offended the Colonial Office which promptly banned its entry into colonial territories. But ingenious Nguyen contacted sympathetic seamen or used other means to smuggle it into the colonies. Thus, this small paper was able, under extreme difficulty, to grow and expand its political influence.

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Soon Nguyen joined the French Socialist Party, becoming the first Vietnamese to join a French political party. He felt that the Socialist Party was sympathetic to Viet Nam.

The French Socialist Party was then split into two factions, one siding with the Second Internationale, and the other with the Third Internationale. Favoring the Third Internationale were Professor Marcel Kachin and the writer Cochliet, whereas Leon Blum and Paul Foch (Fu Si) supported the Second Internationale.

After the historic conference at Tours, the French Socialist Party formally split in two. The majority organized the French Communist Party as part of the Third Internationale, and Nguyen Ai Quoc joined them.

As Nguyen's political activities increased, the French Colonial Office wanted to deport or arrest him, but they feared adverse reaction to such action. Nguyen knew practically all the deputies to the National Assembly, and lawyers of the Socialist Party who could defend him. According to the French laws, his patriotic activities inside France were legitimate, whereas were he so engaged in overseas territories, he could be arrested as dangerous to public security. That was why so many patriotic elements in the colonies were often arrested and executed by the French.

Although leaving France would be dangerous, Nguyen wanted to return to Viet Nam. He was now well versed in the techniques of organization and campaign work. His thoughts for his country by then, it could be said, had reached the state where he forgot to eat or sleep.

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VII. TO THE USSR

One Saturday afternoon, colleagues at the Salia found Nguyen Ai Quoc missing. After some waiting, they became worried, and inquired at the home of Mr. B., a lawyer from the Antilles, with whom Nguyen often visited. They learned that he had left France. He left with Mr. B. a letter for his friends, in which he set forth the reasons for his sudden departure. In his opinion, they had done much to propagandize the movement to liberate colonial peoples, but he warned that they should not stop with this phase. They must go forward from propaganda to action. He considered it his role to return to his native land, to organize, educate, and lead his people in the fight for freedom. He urged others to follow him. Lastly, he apologized for not being able to say goodbye in person, because of the close watch of the police and his unwillingness to disclose his whereabouts.

Thus, we again lose trace of Nguyen temporarily.

He is next seen getting off a Soviet merchant ship just returned to Leningrad from Europe. Here he was met by two sailors who brought him to the "Bureau" where he was interrogated regarding his identity, reasons for his visit, and acquaintances in Russia. Nguyen admitted that he had arrived as a stowaway, without credentials or identification, but claimed to know some Russian students, Melkowsky, Peterloff, and others, all of whom were then in Paris. However, he knew two Frenchmen, Marcel Kachin and M. Cochliet, then in Russia. At the request of his interrogator, he wrote to them a letter, and was told to await a reply. Meanwhile, he was taken to the International Motel. Later he was identified by a friend of Kachin and allowed to proceed to Moscow.

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It was very comfortable there and the food was good, although at the time everything was in short supply in Russia.

Two days later, a young Frenchman, Paul, came to see Nguyen. He was a friend whom Nguyen met in Paris, and they were overjoyed at seeing each other.

VIII. WORK IN CHINA

Moscow, the capital of the great socialist country of the USSR - Lighthouse of man's new civilization and the sacred land of the proletarian revolution. The glowing red star on top the Kremlin is a symbol of hope of all mankind. How many oppressed and exploited peoples of the world look towards it.

Nguyen lived in this free and happy land of the USSR for a time, during which he did not waste a single moment. He diligently studied various ideologies and the theory of revolutionary techniques, avidly absorbed experiences and strength and prepared for the liberation of his unfortunate Vietnamese countrymen.

He then returned to Annam via China and stopped in Canton.

It was not long after World War I. To recover from the war losses, the French imperialists were using every means to extort and exploit Indochina. The Vietnamese were facing greater hardship and the flame of resistance, once again, was lit. Not long before Nguyen arrived in Canton, a young Vietnamese patriot threw a bomb at the Governor-General of Indochina in Sha-mien (Leased Territory in Canton, but the Governor-General, in Canton for a visit, luckily escaped death.

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At that time, China was dominated by warlords who were backed by imperialists. But nationalism was revived among the people. It began with the protest against the 21 Demands of Japan, followed by the 30 May massacre which developed into a paralyzing strike in Canton and Hong Kong, and finally ended in the start of the Northern Expedition of the Nationalist Revolutionary Army.

Nguyen arrived in China during this unparalleled turbulent time. He worked for awhile as a secretary for Borodin, the Russian adviser of the National Government, then in Kwangtung. He studied Chinese politics, but did not neglect work for the liberation of his country. He organized the Vietnamese in China into the Viet Nam Revolutionary Youth League and published Youth /Thanh Nien, a weekly/ as a mouthpiece of the Vietnamese revolution. With the help of Liao Chung-k'ai, he organized the League of Oppressed Asiatic Peoples which had as members Indo-Chinese, Koreans, and Japanese. This was similar to the League of Colonial Nationalists /Inter-Colonial Union/ which he organized in Europe.

At the time, China had just put into effect Sun Yat-sen's Three-People's Principles and Nationalists and Communists were sufficiently cooperating to mobilize the strength of the masses. Thus, the power of the revolution was developed and extended quickly. Victory after victory was reported and the greater part of the bases of warlords were taken over by the Revolutionary Army. The control of the Revolutionary Government of Kwangtung had been extended to Nanking, and the future of the revolution was indeed bright. Nguyen, like the majority of the Chinese, was drunk with the glories of victory.

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The Viet Nam Revolutionary Youth League, under his leadership, had begun to infiltrate into Viet Nam. The French imperialists, shocked by the strength of the Chinese Revolution and the rise of the Vietnamese revolution in its wake, put into immediate effect a terrorist-suppression policy and arrested patriots in large numbers. But, as the angry tide of the people against slavery and exploitation had already started on its course, the strong-arm policy of the imperialist produced just the opposite results and served only to awaken the hypnotized Vietnamese people. They were receptive to the revolutionary calls and propaganda of Nguyen, and opened up new avenues to the secret activities of Nguyen and his followers.

When the French imperialists realized the folly of their policy of military suppression, they renewed their attempt to hypnotize and drug the people. Alexandre Vallan (Ma Lun) of the Socialist Party was appointed Governor-General of Indochina. Within a short time, this change in command aroused much interest among the people, but subsequent events proved that the reactionary policy of Vallan was unfortunate. The hopes of the Vietnamese people for better treatment from the imperialists vanished. Thus, Nguyen's slogan: "To be liberated, we can only rely on ourselves," received great response.

In addition, Nguyen set up classes in Canton to train revolutionary workers for Viet Nam. Many young intellectuals secretly left Viet Nam to train in Canton, after which they returned to Viet Nam to participate in the liberation work.

Under the direct influence of the great revolution in China, the Vietnamese revolutionary movement developed rapidly. Unfortunately, in 1927, Kuomintang leader Chiang Kai-shek sold out the revolution, capitulated

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to imperialism, and joining forces with feudalistic landlords bureaucrats, and warlords, staged a party purge, arresting and executing large numbers of Commercial Party members and other liberal young men. Since Nguyen worked for Borodin, he was regarded by the Kuomintang as a Communist, and to save his neck he had to flee.

Again, Nguyen disappeared. Many of his trusted colleagues were arrested by the Kuomintang.

IX. FARMER, PEDDLER AND REVOLUTIONIST

Somewhere in the central part of Siam lived a group of Vietnamese who were for the most part farmers or small traders. They had started a school to teach their children Thai and Vietnamese. In the auditorium, high on the wall, was a portrait of the Siamese King. Slightly lower, hung a picture of Van Hanh Thai who gave his life for his people, in the assassination attempt in Sha-mien. After work every day, they would gather in the courtyard of the school. Then a farmer, whose thin body and dried face were not unlike those of other farmers, would stand up and, in a clear and slow voice, read a story from the newspaper or a passage from a book, then try to explain or interpret whatever he had read. After a discussion on current events or a lecture on the book, they would sing Vietnamese patriotic songs. Later, this farmer-lecturer travelled as a peddler to neighboring villages and towns, visiting Vietnamese. He preached to them, and organized them.

The Siamese were a generous people, believing firmly in Buddhism. Under the Buddhist tradition of donations for monks the farmer-lecturer-peddler, or Nguyen Ai Quoc, without spending money, travelled everywhere to further his revolutionary work. He first organized an Overseas Viet Nam Friendship Club, which published a weekly.

While he was in China, Nguyen projected from the north his pro-paganda and campaign for the revolution. Now he simply changed the direction, and pushed his work from the west, but he could not conceal his activities for long. Wherever there were sufficient overseas Vietnamese, a primary school would soon spring up. Wherever there was such a school, the parents and relatives of the children would gather to discuss current events, listen to lectures, and talk about their daily work. There was an obvious and distinct change for the better in the Vietnamese communities in Siam, and this change could not be covered up.

The French knew that Nguyen Ai Quoc must be behind this activity, but they could not locate him. When the French agents got dangerously close to his trail, Nguyen cut off his hair and became a monk in a monastery where he continued his patriotic and revolutionary work under the very eyes of the spies.

During that time, another secret revolutionary movement, of a nationalist and trade unionist character, was gathering force in Laos, particularly in cities along the Mekong.

Meanwhile in Viet Nam, the Viet Nam Revolutionary Youth League had succeeded in establishing branches throughout the country. Other political groups were formed, and there was the Viet Nam Nationalist Party, under the leadership of Nguyen Thai Hoc and Nguyen Kho Nhu, with its center in Hue, capital of Annam. Then, there was the New Viet Nam [Revolutionary?] Party, under a group of young intellectuals with headquarters in Annam.

Although the Viet Nam Revolutionary Youth League was commonly considered to be under strong Communist influence, in reality, it was not a true Marxist party. However, it was not strange that people so

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regarded it, since its policy was to unite the people, particularly the great masses of the poor, and its organizer was Nguyen Ai Quoc who had joined the French Communist Party, lived in Moscow for many years, and worked for Strodin.

Members of the Viet Nam Nationalist Party, on the other hand, were drawn mostly from the middle class, principally small land-owners, merchants, teachers, civil servants and minor military officers. They lacked a clear-cut policy; although they wanted a republic, they were not quite sure what type of a republic they wanted. They paid little attention to political, economic and social issues, and emphasized only the military aspect. They concentrated their effort in winning over Vietnamese soldiers in the French Colonial Army. However, since they accepted members indiscriminately, it was a party with an unhealthy structure.

The New Viet Nam Revolutionary Party was an aggressive liberal party. They viewed the Communist Party as over-aggressive, and the San Min Chu I not progressive enough. However, they were agreed upon one point: the objective of their struggle was the liberation of Viet Nam. This new political party had as its members principally intellectuals. They had courage and energy, but they lacked political experience and were politically immature. They were active in several cities such as Hue and Vinh.

X. CONSOLIDATION OF THE REVOLUTIONARY FRONT

Nguyen Ai Quoc, posing as a monk, worked hard for the Vietnamese independence revolution. Only a few compatriots saw him. Other comrades knew only his name, but not his face, nor his whereabouts.

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Although he often attended party meetings, he was not recognized. He knew intimately, however, all that was going on in Viet Nam.

Two big events in Viet Nam made it necessary for him to leave the confines of the Siamese monastery.

The first was the Viet Nam Nationalist Party's reported preparation for revolt. Nguyen thought the time was not ripe and saw inevitable failure unless the revolt were postponed. But, Siam was far from China, and while he was negotiating high mountains and seas, the situation took a bad turn for the worse. By the time he arrived, it was too late.

The direct cause for the uprising was the shooting of a French slave-trader by a Vietnamese student. This precipitated strong-arm police action and cruel suppression on the part of the French administration which they arrested and executed large numbers of people. Actually, the incident was a spontaneous patriotic act of the Vietnamese people, but the French colonial authorities used it as an excuse to curb the Viet Nam Nationalist Party. Since that party was not a strong, healthy organization, it took a severe beating. Many of its leaders and members were arrested. Faced with almost certain annihilation, the leaders, Nguyen Thai Hoc and Nguyen Kho Nhu decided to stage a revolt. Unfortunately their plans leaked out prematurely, and they were forced to revolt sooner, on the evening of 11 February 1930. The uprising was a complete failure, incurring tragic losses of life. The two leaders were captured and executed, and the Viet Nam Nationalist Party was thus dissolved in heroic sacrifice for the country. The French colonial authorities happily celebrated their victory, announcing the end of the Vietnamese nationalism, and shouting, "Long Live French Colonialism!"

The second event was the internal split of the Viet Nam Revolutionary Youth League. Shortly before the revolt of the Viet Nam Nationalist Party

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in February 1930, the New Viet Nam Revolutionary Party and the Viet Nam Revolutionary Youth League were amalgamated into one party. Thus, there were only two political parties in Viet Nam: the Nationalist and the Revolutionary. When the Viet Nam Nationalist Party was crushed by the French there remained only the Revolutionary Party.

But the Revolutionary Party soon was divided into three wings, each reorganizing itself into a Communist Party. Consequently, there were three Communist Parties in Viet Nam.

Reaction to the ruthless French policy of suppression engendered the steady and rapid growth of the Revolutionary Party, but the party's internal factions caused grave concern among many members who saw weakness in division.

When he arrived in China, Huynh called a meeting of the leaders of the three Communist Parties, to whom he expressed his opinion that Viet Nam should have only one Communist party, not three. He said that the wealth and property of Indochina had been seized by the French colonialists, and that the people of Indochina suffered from poverty and French exploitation. The mission of Communist leaders, he continued, was to unite the people to fight for national independence and then to strive for national reconstruction and prosperity.

But to realize these objectives, Ho asserted, the party organization, must be unified and its policy must be nationalistic.

This conference resulted in the reunion of the three factions. At the same time, policy of strategy was determined.

While the French colonialists continued their terrorist government, the Revolutionary Party, with new unity and new courage, worked even more intensively.

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The results were good. In April 1930, a big strike broke out among the weaving mill workers in Nam Dinh in the north. The workers demanded increased wages and the abolition of the barbaric custom of corporal punishment. The French employers answered by arresting the strike leaders, and the strikers countered with an organized demonstration.

The strike wave soon spread to national proportions. Similar walkouts were called in various cities in Tonkin and Annam. The French imperialists put into effect bloody suppression measures. The demonstrators were beaten and strafed from airplanes, and, as a result, several hundred persons were killed or wounded. It was May 1931 before the strikes ceased. The French colonialists scored a temporary victory through large-scale killing, but they now realized that Vietnamese resistance was growing more violent.

XI. PERILOUS DAYS

For many years the French colonialists closely watched Nguyen Ai Quoc's activities, and sought his whereabouts. They knew that he was in Canton during 1925-27, but since he was under the wings of the Kwangtung Revolutionary National Government, they could do nothing. Prior and subsequent to the Canton period, however, French imperialists could not find out exactly where he was.

The British, Dutch and Japanese had organized the International Police Cooperative Organ to find and apprehend patriotic Koreans, Javanese, Indians, and Vietnamese, whom they classified as international agents or, more accurately, Soviet agents.

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Since the British regarded Nguyen as a Soviet agent, they believed when he turned up in Hong Kong, that he had come to overthrow British rule there. Consequently, he was arrested at once. The French Colonial Administration in Viet Nam immediately ear-marked a huge sum of money for his extradition.

Nguyen was treated as a major criminal, and was in prison a long time before a good friend enlisted the help of a British lawyer, Rossby (Lo Shi Pi), chairman of the Hong Kong Lawyers' Association. With legal help, Nguyen's case reached the Supreme Court of Hong Kong, and after more than a month's deliberation, he was acquitted, but ordered to leave Hong Kong.

The Hong Kong Court's decision was clever, expressing the opinion that Nguyen was not guilty, yet giving the French a chance to nab him. Nguyen's lawyer took exception to this ruling and appealed to the King's Bench in London. Finally, Nguyen won the case and was released unconditionally.

Nguyen set out for London, but when his ship docked at Singapore, he was apprehended and returned to Hong Kong. There he was arrested on trumped up charges of illegal entry into the colony. Again through the help of Rossby, Nguyen was released. Other friends arranged for him to leave Hong Kong secretly.

This secret departure was well planned, and Nguyen escaped the notice of the vigilant French agents. He left the colony disguised as a rich Chinese merchant, and took refuge in a large Chinese coastal city in the home of a wealthy Chinese merchant who was a friend of Rossby. There Nguyen lived a leisurely life, regaining some measure of health lost in prison years. After six or seven months of rest, he

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bade goodbye to his host and set out on the road of revolutionary struggle once again.

For a long time afterwards, his whereabouts were unknown. The arrests in Hong Kong had exposed him to so many enemies that he took special care to avoid detection.

XII. THE HEROIC FIGHT OF THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE

The French suppression of the strike wave and other mass patriotic demonstrations and activities, and arrest of Nguyen Ai Quoc and other Vietnamese leaders brought the country relative peace and order from 1931 to 1933. By 1934, the flames of Vietnam independence movement were once again burning, and reached considerable height in 1935. Large-scale strikes and mass demonstrations were organized in various cities and towns such as Saigon, Hanoi, and Huiphong. The workers demanded better treatment, an eight-hour day, and the right to unionize. Their efforts brought some rewards.

When the Popular Front rose to power in France in 1936, conditions in the colonial territories improved somewhat. Many political prisoners were released and Vietnamese newspapers were allowed to appear. The French National Assembly sent a mission to study colonial conditions.

The Vietnamese people seized this opportunity to initiate a new campaign. Under the name of the Vietnamese People's Assembly, committees, lectures and mass meetings were organized to collect the views of the people to submit to the Mission for reference.

The People's Assembly suggested the following main points:

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1. Organize a democratic front
2. Improve the living standards of the people
3. Give the people the right to vote in local council elections
4. Recognize the right of Viet Nam to share in its own defense.

This campaign continued for three years. The Vietnamese were gaining ground, when unfortunately, World War II broke out, and the few democratic rights and privileges they had obtained were revoked by Daladier.

The Daladier Government banned all democratic and nationalist movements in Viet Nam, closed the native papers, dissolved all organizations of the people, rearrested former political prisoners, and seized some new people. Prisons and concentration camps were again full. Terrorist rule was revived with renewed vigor.

Soon however, a new and powerful voice echoed throughout Viet Nam:

"We stand beside the Allies,
To fight against international fascism;
Expel the French fascists;
Fight for the independence of our country.
People of Viet Nam! Unite!"

Those were the powerful calls of the Viet Nam Independence League. [Viet Nam Doc Lap Dong Minh Hoi] The League, or Viet Minh for short, was a united front organization which arose to meet the new situation two or three years before the World War II. The Viet Minh policy could be understood and supported by all Vietnamese. Hence, the Viet Minh was able to expand rapidly, even though the French terrorist rule was more ruthless.

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The leader of this new united front movement was none other than Nguyen Ai Quoc or Ho Chi Minh. When he reappeared is not known.

Towards the end of 1940, rebellions occurred at Ha Son in the North, Dalat in the central part, and in Cochinchina. The French imperialists ruthlessly crushed the uprisings by burning villages, by shooting thousands of Vietnamese, throwing them into the seas or burying them alive. These were the mad acts of the dying colonialists, easily matching those of the Nazi German murderers.

French colonial rule weakened with the collapse of France in Europe. The Japanese imperialists then seized the chance to invade Viet Nam.

After a battle at Lang Son, the French colonial army retreated swiftly before the advance of Japanese fascism, and the doors of Viet Nam were thrown wide open to the new invader.

Ho and his comrades immediately issued a declaration to the Vietnamese people that their first enemy was Japanese fascism. They sought in vain to collaborate with the French colonial administration against the Japanese fascists, but the French colonialists joined the Japanese invader against the patriotic Vietnamese.

The Vietnamese were not discouraged, and extended their guerrilla warfare against both the Japanese invader and French reactionaries.

XIII. IN PRISONS OF CHINA

Their guerrilla operations greatly restricted because of primitive weapons, responsible Viet Minh leaders decided to approach the Allies in the Far East for aid and military supplies.

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Among the Allies, China was the nearest geographically and the most intimately related with Viet Nam. Thus, it was logical that China be approached. As a China expert, Nguyen Ai Quoc was unanimously chosen to head a mission to China. One of two other delegates was nabbed by French and Japanese police before he reached the Chinese-Indochinese border, and the other fell into a valley while negotiating a mountain ridge at night. Nguyen found himself alone on arrival in China. It was then that Nguyen assumed the name of Ho Chi Minh to escape detection.

Unfortunately Ho was arrested the very night of his arrival in China. He was put into the local jail where for two or more weeks, he was chained day and night. He demanded a hearing with local officials, but no one received him. He wired to his offices, but no reply came. Thus, he was locked up for six weeks, before he was suddenly transferred elsewhere. Where he was heading he did not know and no one would tell him either. With his hands tied behind his back and guarded, Ho walked up and down mountain ranges to an unknown destination.

His tolerance of discomfort was gradually undermined by attacks of lice, mosquitoes, and scabbies. Their persistent itchiness of his skin almost drove him insane. Ho began to lose heart; his health went bad; he grew thin as a skeleton; his hair turned white all of sudden and began to fall; and his eyesight was failing fast. Often he suffered temporary blindness. Besides these physical hardships, Ho grieved greatly for the waste of valuable time by such imprisonment. This transfer from prison to prison wasted some 80 precious days in over 30 jails. He was taken to Kuei-lin and finally to Liu-chou where he was put in the army prison of the Fourth War Area, but he accorded the

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special treatment of a political prisoner. He had sufficient food, was no longer chained, and could read Sao Tang Pao, Chiang Kai-shek's Speeches and Writing, China's Destiny, San Min Chu I and other books and papers of similar nature.

It was in this prison that he learned of the existence of a Viet Nam Revolutionary League [Viet Nam Cach Mang Dong Minh Hoi]. He also learned the reason for his arrest and long detainment: he was suspected of having come to China in order to break up this organization.

The Revolutionary League's two leaders were Trang Boi Cong and Nguyen Hoi Son, who had both been in China for more than 40 years. Trang served in the Chinese Army with the rank of colonel. He had never before joined a Vietnamese nationalist movement. Nguyen Hoi Son was more than 70 years old and could hardly speak Annamese intelligently. He had left Viet Nam in 1905 with Pham Boi Chau. For some unknown reason, Pham ignored him once they were out of the country. Since then, Nguyen Hoi-Son had earned a living for himself and his Chinese wife as a fortune-teller. He knew many important Chinese, but like Trang, had never taken part in any patriotic activities. Since the death of Pham Boi Chau, however, he somehow advertised himself as heir and successor to that patriotic revolutionist.

A third leader in the Revolutionary League was Tran Boi, (X) a young adventurer. In league with Trang, Tran was more powerful than Nguyen Hoi Son. The entire budget of this organization was generously donated by the Chinese Kuomintang. Its objectives and purposes could be easily gauged.

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Ho saw clearly the difficulties he was facing and began to conquer these environmental obstacles with sheer patience and perseverance. He acted as if he was in complete agreement with the San Min Chu I and a great admirer of Chiang Kai-shek's China's Destiny which he said he would translate and send to Viet Nam for publication. Perhaps because he actually finished the translation, the Kuomintang thought he had reformed. After 14 months of imprisonment, he was released, though kept under constant surveillance.

Under the guidance and direction of the Kuomintang, Ho soon called a conference of Vietnamese revolutionists from China and Viet Nam. Ho represented the Viet Minh, and there were delegates from four or five other organizations in Viet Nam. More than 20 representatives attended.

Nguyen Hoi Son refused to attend when Trong Doi Cong was elected chairman and Ho made the alternate central executive member.

Ho suggested that he choose a few Revolutionary League members for work in Viet Nam. The Kuomintang approved the idea, but other Revolutionary League people were secretly working against him. Finally, Ho returned to Viet Nam after an absence of two years, and resumed leadership in the country. By that time, the Viet Minh was strong on a national level and was continuing its guerrilla warfare against the French and Japanese military forces.

The much awaited Allied landing in Viet Nam was slow to materialize. The Japanese, however, felt the approach of this fateful day, and to hold the initiative, showed their hand on 9 March 1945. Within 24 hours, the French military and civil mechanism was dissolved.

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XIV. VICTORY OF ARMED OPERATIONS

Soon after the Japanese took over the French administration of Viet Nam, they formally declared the "independence" of Viet Nam, to gain public support. But the people were not deceived. Under the leadership of the Viet Minh, the Vietnamese people refused to cooperate with the Japanese.

The Japanese then proceeded to hand over the government to the well-known pro-Japanese political party, the Dai Viet Party. These base Vietnamese, however, did not prove worthy of the honor. They could only show corruption, extortion and cruelty toward the French who had lost power to resist. The Japanese then put in as premier an old corrupt scholar, Tran Chung Giang, to organize a puppet government and army. Thus, a puppet rule, under the wings of the Japanese, at last was set up.

At that time the Viet Minh was in control of seven provinces in north Tonkin. The puppet army, joining up with the Japanese, engaged the Viet Minh in battle. The puppet army, however, had no fighting power and it became the transport unit of the Viet Minh guerrilla. With captured military supplies, the guerrillas expanded rapidly. Four years earlier, when they were first organized, they had only 35 men, 2 pistols, 3 rifles, and 1 mauser, plus some swords and primitive weapons, and were led by a young high school teacher, Vo Nguyen Giap. Now they had developed into an organized armed force, 100,000 strong, not including the small, isolated units hiding in various places in the country.

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The Japanese and puppet armies not only found it impossible to destroy the guerrillas, but the guerrillas continued to increase. The Japanese were impatient, but the puppet government could do nothing. It could not even collect taxes, because the slogans of the Viet Minh were:

"Fight against the Japanese invader; fight against the puppet government.

Don't give them a grain of rice; don't give them a cent of money!
Fight for the real independence of Viet Nam!"

Finding their show of military power futile, the Japanese turned reluctantly to another tactic. They wrote to each local Viet Minh leader, trying to buy or coerce him to surrender and cooperate with the Japanese. No one replied. They then wrote to all high military officers, and lastly to Ho himself. No response came.

Shortly before the Japanese unconditional surrender, the Viet Minh called a National Congress which was enthusiastically attended by delegates from various districts and various countries.

The principal agenda of the Congress was:

1. Cooperation with the impending Allied landing in Viet Nam.
2. Rescue and protection of crash-landed Allied airmen.
3. Vigorous preparation for an armed revolt.
4. Seizure of political control.

News of the Japanese surrender came in the first night of the Congress. This resulted in a change in the agenda of the Congress.

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The agenda for the second day of the Congress was limited to the last two items: namely, armed revolt and seizure of political power. Plans for the armed revolt had been in preparation for some time and needed only the final decision and approval of the delegates. A committee for armed revolt was organized and area and local leaders were chosen.

A Central Executive Committee [People's Liberation Committee] was also elected, empowered to set up and carry on a provisional government. He was unanimously selected chairman of this committee. Detailed directives and orders for armed revolt were issued.

The Viet Minh's forward guerrilla units marched off to battle on 16 July 1945 [Sic]. In every city, town or village, people could see the new Vietnamese flag, and the Viet Minh's slogans:

"Down with Japanese Fascism.

Long Live Vietnamese Independence.

Brothers, arm yourselves!"

Small underground guerrilla units broke into the open. The Viet Minh was taking in new members in vast numbers, and leading the people in the war effort.

The guerrillas and the people began their attacks on the Japanese garrisons. The Japanese began to retreat in disorder, and Tran's puppet government was in plight. The armed revolt spread from Cochinchina to Tonkin.

By 19 August 1945, the government of Viet Nam was in the hands of the Viet Minh. The people were jubilant.

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Emperor Bao Dai voluntarily abdicated, declaring, "I would rather be a free citizen than a puppet emperor."

XV. DEARLY BELOVED LEADER OF VIETNAMESE PEOPLE

On the road to Tu Yen, the Japanese were still putting up resistance. Tu Yen is only 60 kilometers from Hanoi. Vo Nguyen Giap personally led a force and fought bitterly for two days before Tu Yen was liberated. Only after the occupation of Tu Yen could he continue to Hanoi.

Ho's entry into Hanoi was quiet and secret. At a meeting called by the Provisional Government (the Viet Minh's Central Executive Committee [People's Liberation Committee]), Ho proposed to organize a united coalition government that would include representatives of all patriotic groups and political parties, as well as non-partisan civic leaders.

His resolution was adopted unanimously. Many members of the Provisional Government voluntarily resigned to give way to non-Viet Minh people. The first [Democratic] Republic of Viet Nam was born in an atmosphere of generous cordiality.

Almost one-half the cabinet members were not members of the Viet Minh. The Cabinet unanimously elected Ho the first president of the republic. He was also asked to draft a formal independence declaration.

When he read his draft and asked the opinions of his trusted lieutenants, Ho found it impossible to hide his self-satisfaction. He said that this was the first time that he had written anything useful although he had written much in his life. Indeed, the

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Declaration of Independence was the most glorious page in the history of Viet Nam. It declared the end of absolute monarchy and oppressive colonial rule. It opened a new era for democracy.

On 2 September 1945, Ho introduced the new government to the people.

Since President Ho's past boasted one hundred different names, more than 10 professions, several imprisonments, and one death sentence, the Vietnamese people were waiting to see not only the first president of the republic, but an unusual person.

The following is the impression of a Vietnamese reporter who attended this mass meeting:

"August 19 was the day we gained political control of the country. September 2 was the day we showed to the world that our political control had been consolidated.

"To the Vietnamese people, September 2 was not only a solemn day, but also a glorious and happy day.

"Without doubt, Hanoi was the luckiest of all cities. For it, September 2 was not only a glorious day of Vietnamese independence, but also the day it saw with its own eyes the most admired and beloved son of Viet Nam.

"People of Hanoi and nearby towns and cities, rushed toward the San Dinh Park in a happy stream. The streets and alleys were filled with the human tide. There must have been more than a million people. Since the beginning of history, this country had never witnessed such a great occasion.

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"The most moving moment occurred when the people first spotted President Ho.

"During the solemn ceremony, the people had awaited their president and leader, thinking that he could not be a person like former emperors, but rather a well dressed modern head of state, benedict, dignified, aloof and formal. Those who measured President Ho in these terms soon saw how mistaken they were. When they finally saw President Ho, they found that he was simply 'Uncle Ho', a genuine Vietnamese. Everybody was waiting to see a head of state, but they saw only a human being, simply-dressed, unassuming, and kind.

"When he began to read the Declaration of Independence, his clear, resonant voice still carried traces of his former exciting and tense guerrilla life in the woods. When he finished reading, he asked, 'Brethren, do you all understand?'

"This simple question banished whatever distance remained between the President and his people. Through this unexpected, strange question, President Ho shed all formality, tradition, and distinction between the official and the people. He became once again the Vietnamese 'Uncle Ho'.

"In answer to the President, more than a million people, in a voice as terrifying as a bolt of thunder, shouted just one word, 'Understand'.

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"This was what it gave me, as it gave all others, the most impressive day of my life. This was a day never to be forgotten, the day of Viet Nam's independence."

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